

**Political History Collection  
Interview H.0018.02 : Tape 2**

**Melvyn Goldstein, Editor**

**Center for Research on Tibet  
Department of Anthropology**

**and**

**Case Western Reserve University  
Cleveland, Ohio**

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**Location of Interview:** India  
**Date of Interview:** May 1993  
**Language of Interview:** Tibetan  
**Interviewed by:** Paljor Tsarong  
**Name:** Laja Thubden Tempa [Tib. bla phyag thub bstan bstan pa]  
**Gender:** Male  
**Age:** ca. 67  
**Date of Birth:** ca. 1926

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## **Abstract**

Laja Thubden Tempa [Tib. bla phyag thub bstan bstan pa] worked in the Tibetan mint at Trapchi with Tsarong Dzasa, and later became a Khenjung and one of the heads of the Laja Office. In this interview, he discusses the tsidrun policies of the 13th Dalai Lama and the social changes after the Chinese arrival in 1951. He details political disagreements over the National People's Congress and Tibetan currency and describes the Military Administration Committee in comparison to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. He talks about the role of the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama in relation to the Chinese, Chinese propaganda and political songs, and how he worked in the Translation and Editing Section in the Tibet Autonomous Region. He also discusses this department's role under the Chinese, the interactions between Tibetans and the PLA, including policies, new PLA buildings, Lhasa's security, and an incident on the Kuru Bridge. Finally, he discusses more generally the Chinese and Tibetan diplomacy, and the attitudes of the Tibetan people at the time of the Chinese arrival.

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## **Tape 2**

**Q:** Before anything, I wanted to ask you where you were living in Lhasa.

**A:** I lived at the south side of Shide Monastery, and Nyungne [Tib. snyung gnas] Temple was my neighbor.

**Q:** When you were there, who did you live with?

**A:** I was one of the tsidrun that had a shagtsang with a gegen and gidru. Among the tsidrun, there were gerpa tsidrun who perpetuated the line through estates and who were not lay officials, like Tregang and Möndrong [Tib. smon grong]. Then among the lay officials, there were those who had lay and monk officials. Our type, if I were to tell you about my shagtsang. After the 13th Dalai Lama took [over] the reins of Tibet, he did an investigation on the tsidrun, a sershib [Tib. ser zhib]. This was to check whether they had lost their celibacy or not. Normally, the tsidrun belong to the monks and they were not allowed to have women. Through the investigation, many tsidrun happened to have lost their celibacy and they were expelled. So the number of tsidrun became small. Therefore, he recruited tsidrun as a tax, a trachag, from the three great monasteries and Muru, Shide, the branch monasteries in Yarlung and in Chongye [Tib. 'phyongs rgyas] to substitute for the expelled tsidrun. There had been five generations in my shagtsang, including me, that had become tsidrun.

**Q:** Was there the system of trachag before the 13th Dalai Lama?

**A:** Yes, there was this system from the past.

**Q:** The reason I wanted to ask you how you were living, was that [because] during 1952-53, the cost of living had increased, right? So I was wondering if you had any discussions during this time or not.

**A:** I see. The price increase was something that we had seen with our own eyes, right? Then a lot of Chinese came and there were a lot of road workers. The Chinese hired many Tibetan workers, paid them wages, [and they] were also sent [to Lhasa]. Commodities became very scarce and the price increased 3-4-5-6-10 times. Before the Chinese came, I guess that the price of 1 Bo of barley was 100 sang. After the Chinese arrived it was 400-500 sang. Butter and meat increased in the same way.

**Q:** So prices were going up because of scarcity, right?

**A:** Before the Chinese came, commodities were sufficient, as there were not that many people. When the Chinese arrived they brought nothing with them. The Chinese, poor fellows, endured much hardship and the soldiers were forced to come up. So they boiled barley and ate it like our animals. Tsamba was scarce, and that's how the soldiers' livelihood was difficult.

**Q:** It is said somewhere that they asked for rice from India.

**A:** Yes, yes. They brought some rice from India, since it's close by.

**Q:** Then it's said that they planted fields somewhere.

**A:** Yes, they made the soldiers plant fields and they made them self sufficient in vegetable [production].

**Q:** But it must not have been sufficient.

**A:** Regarding vegetables, later on the various regiments had enough vegetables that they sold some in the market. However, I don't know what fertilizer they were using, but their vegetables had no taste. They were big, but soft inside. Their radishes and potatoes were big, but they had no taste. The ones we grew in Tibet, by nature, had the nutrients of the soil, and whatever we had was nutritious and tasty since chemical fertilizer was not used.

**Q:** So even earlier they were using chemical fertilizer?

**A:** Where?

**Q:** When the Chinese first came.

**A:** At first they did not, but later they did. In the beginning they couldn't do [that] right away, right?

**Q:** In 1954, the Dalai Lama went to the National People's Congress meeting in China, right? Just before that, were there discussions that the Dalai Lama should go down to China or that he should not go? Were there discussions and was the tsondu called?

**A:** Yes. Yes, there were a lot [of discussions]. That's why, I told you yesterday also, that the majority of the people said that he should not go at all. Besides, the Dalai Lama was young. China was far away and we already knew how the Communists behave. If we took him down there, then we doubted that he would return. The reason for this was that in the eastern part of Tibet, there were many lamas that were killed, right? So there were stories about that. And out of fear, they were saying that the Dalai Lama should not go down. Most were saying that. A minority sort of liked the Chinese side and behaved as if they knew their policy, and they gave reasons why it would be good for the Dalai Lama to go down. And as I told you yesterday, because of this, a divine lottery or senriy was done and the Dalai Lama did go down. So it was by force that the Dalai Lama was taken down.

**Q:** Did some say that it was good to go down and have talks, and that the Dalai Lama should meet Mao Zedong?

**A:** Yes. They talked about the advantages and the Dalai Lama himself must have also thought that, [as] so far, discussions were only with people who were sent to Tibet. And it would have been helpful to meet and talk with the main members of the CCP. He may have thought that there may have been some differences between those who were giving the orders and those who were carrying out the tasks. So he had to go down.

**Q:** During this time, who were the main ones or groups who were saying this and that?

**A:** Now I can't remember.

**Q:** If such discussions were to take place, would the tsondu meet or the Kashag?

**A:** At first the Kashag would meet, and if the Kashag could not decide, then the tsondu would be called. There were a lot of things like that, but now I can't remember. Then there were the representatives of the three great monasteries, and they said that they thought the Dalai Lama should not go. So I heard of such things, but I was not a representative at the tsondu.

**Q:** How long did you stay in China?

**A:** In China [answer not finished]

**Q:** You were together with the Dalai Lama, right?

**A:** Yes. The Dalai Lama stayed for almost a year. And then, in the 5th Tibetan month, I think, day 10, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa and returned on the 10th of 1955.

**Q:** At Beijing, what talks were there politically?

**A:** Whatever took place at the Chinese meeting, I can't tell you. Regarding the Tibetan issue, I already told you about Tashilhunpo, right? I told you about Ngabö and Tashilhunpo saying that they wanted Shigatse Dzong, right? I don't know the dates, but at one time, the office of the Central Committee told the Dalai Lama that the Central Committee was going to give, I think it was 4,000,000 dayan, yearly for the expenses of the Tibetan government, and that it would be good if the Tibetan money was not printed and used. This was supposed to be some help for Tibet. The Dalai Lama did not give a reply immediately, since there were one or two kalön and some representatives of the tsondu [not there]. The Dalai Lama must have said that they would give them the reply. Since I was not present I can't give you the details. So this is my approximation. However, it seems that the Dalai Lama spoke with the Kashag upon his return. When we came from Lhasa, there was probably talk that the main agenda was to

attend the National People's Congress as the representative, and the idea wasn't to decide things about the Tibetan issue. Even if it was, since the Dalai Lama was present, business that could be decided was decided. But if consultations were needed, there may have been talks before they even left that the tsondu would be asked if things could not be decided down there. Among the entourage, there were very few of us and we said, "Regarding the money, it is a little difficult to decide whether to accept the order given by Central Committee or not. However, in Tibet we have the tsondu gyendzom, and we will send a telegram to them. Whatever reply they give us, we will keep you informed." This is what was said. So a telegram was sent to Tibet and the tsondu made [had] a detailed discussion. They said, "The Central Committee is saying that we should get rid of our currency and accept the dayan. What should I say? [It] does not seem to be something that we would like to accept, and as far as the dayan is concerned, we would not like to accept [this]. Our Tibetan currency is being printed at the Trapchi Legung and this we would like to continue." So they told the Chinese that this was what the tsondu had decided. This the Chinese agreed to and until 1959 when they totally used their force in Tibet, [the Tibetan currency remained]. Until this was done, the Tibet Autonomous Region, which included monk and lay officials, and the Office of the Religious Association [Tib. chos tshogs las khungs] - the ones they have today - this and that [various offices, titles] were there. In fact, when they started the Tibet Autonomous Region, it was huge. At one time, they curtailed the offices. All of their salaries were in dayan. At Lhasa, all cadres of offices both civil and military, whatever they had to buy at Lhasa was all done in dayan, and no Chinese [paper] currency was used. In 1959, since they had taken power, they banned Tibetan currency, and they reduced the rates of Tibetan currency and gave some compensation. I can't tell you in detail since we were already in prison. What I heard was that the 100 sang notes were reduced in half. And they must have done the same with the other notes. Then the trangga garpo and coins of 1 sho, 3 sho and 5 sho, and other earlier ones, like the 1 karma, I think, they were banned and I doubt any compensation was paid. Now, as to the earlier dayan, they said that now it will not be used and they gathered them up. I don't know what rate they paid for that. So the time came when no one was allowed to own dayan. That's what happened with the currency.

**Q:** Now, in China there were talks about the Tibet Autonomous Region [question not finished]

**A:** Now when the Dalai Lama arrived in China, in the 17-Point Agreement there was a clause which said that the Military Administration Committee was going to start. It was said that this was not wanted and that a Tibet Autonomous Region would be instituted. This was considered to be better. If the Military Administration Committee was to begin, then it had something to do with the military and it was more frightening. Actually, it was exactly the same thing. Whether one instituted the Tibet Autonomous Region or the Military Administration Committee, the ones who worked [in Tibet] were Zhang Jingwu, Zhang Guohua, Tan Guansan, the Commander-in-Chief Fan Siling, all of the military generals. It was all rubbish. It was just to fool you and all lies. They only lied and fooled you, and said things audaciously [Tib. hampa bshad]. So from our point of view, it was the same. Generally, in the various countries of the world, military and civil are separate. The Chinese are not like that. It's all mixed. Everything has to be headed by a military officer.

**Q:** For example, in Tibet, the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was started. How was it? Wasn't there something from Chamdo?

**A:** It was from Chamdo, Tsang which was the Panchen Lama.

**Q:** So if there was something important to discuss, then all of them had to meet, right?

**A:** The Tibet Autonomous Region Office was in session every day. The way things were conducted, the Tibetans had never had a Tibet Autonomous Region, and so we didn't know about that, right? So whatever the Chinese said to do, there was nothing but to do that. In each office there were people from three sides: the government, Labrang and Kham [Tib. gzhung bla khams gum] [Chamdo]. Representatives were sent and religious associations [Tib. chos tshogs] were started, and they instituted representatives, high reincarnations from all the religious sects. In 1956, during the 4th month or so, the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was started after the Dalai Lama returned and Chen Yi came. Chen Yi was some big shot in the State Council [Tib. rgyal srid spyi khyab khang]. Anyway, this fellow was also a military commander. So he came and there were a lot of celebrations for the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Tibet Autonomous Region gave a lot of presents to the government kudraks, and they even went through the motions of making offerings to the Dalai Lama and behaved so [extremely] appropriately. They behaved extremely diplomatically and [acted] smoothly. Then he returned. Our government also gave a grand reception. Then in the 9th month of 1956, I can't remember the exact dates, but during Nehru's premiership, it was said that it was the Buddha Jayanti and that the Dalai Lama was invited to attend. The Chinese said that the Dalai Lama could not go and strongly prevented him from going. So since we were living under the Chinese, there wasn't anything to do, right? So for the time being, it was agreed that Trijang [Tib. khri byang] Lama would go as the Dalai Lama's representative. Once again, Nehru said that the Dalai Lama must come. For us, the Buddha Jayanti is the most important, and so once again, it was requested. No representatives were to go and the Dalai Lama was now permitted to go. It seemed that the Chinese said that if the Dalai Lama was going, then the Panchen Lama also had to go. Anyway, both were to go together. They came to India in 1956 and did all the ceremonies. I think Ngabö was there with the Dalai Lama, and I can't remember whether Shasur was there or not.

**Q:** Ngabö was there and Surkhang also.

**A:** I don't remember Surkhang being there. When they came to India, there were representatives of many countries at the meetings. Whether the Chinese were suspicious that the various countries might be against the Chinese invasion, anyway, Zhou Enlai [was there], and there was also this commander who came to India. They met the Dalai Lama and the Indian leaders. They rushed to India. I think they had some suspicions. Zhou Enlai was very diplomatic and there were a lot of problems regarding the People's Association and the reforms. He said that the Chinese cadres had made some mistakes in Tibet, and that in future, they were going to correct things. There were talks that the reforms would be postponed for about 6 or so years, and there were talks like it was alright even if there were no reforms. These things are most probably in the Dalai Lama's biography. This general behaved rather inappropriately towards the Dalai Lama. Just look at the biography. He said, "A lion is a lion in the snow but becomes a dog in the plains [Tib. sen ge gangs la bsdad na sen ge dang/seng ge thang la babs na khyi rgan]." [It] sort of implies that it is better to return. It seems that they must have heard that the Dalai Lama might stay. Tspön Shakabpa and [the Dalai

Lama's] elder brother [Gyalo Thondup] were here, and they thought that they might have their way. This general also said very bad things to the Dalai Lama. It's all in there, in detail.

**Q:** You mean the one in Tibetan, written a long time ago.

**A:** Yes, the Tibetan one (biography).

**Q:** After that, there were two or three in English.

**A:** Must be, and the account must be the same in both. Regarding the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, the head of the country is the Dalai Lama. He is also the owner of the government. The Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama are called the master and the disciple. Gyawa Yabsey [Tib. rgyal ba yab sras] from the religious side, but politically, there is no equanimity. The reason being, the Panchen Lama is a labrang and never had any government name [title]. So politically there was nothing. Religiously, things had to be done from the religious side and not politically. However, when he came to India, under the instigation of the Chinese, the Indians treated the Panchen Lama exactly the same as the Dalai Lama, just like the Chinese. I did not like that at all, but there wasn't anything to do. Upon returning, the Dalai Lama went to Tashilhunpo, and they gave the Dalai Lama a very mediocre welcome and send off. Anyway, he had already arrived there and there was nothing that could be done. Then the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama came together from Tashilhunpo to Yadong. From there, since they had to cross the Nathula [Tib. sna stod la], they rode horses. When they left from Tashilhunpo, because of the date [arrival in India] they had to leave in a hurry. When they left Shigatse, the Chinese, as well as the people, came to see them off and here too they were together. From Shigatse, the Dalai Lama left for Yadong at 10 or 11. The Panchen Lama stayed somewhat behind. At Phari there is a branch monastery and it is said that the Panchen Lama stayed there.

**Q:** When the Dalai Lama came to India, how far [long] were you together?

**A:** We were together until Yadong, and Ngawang Rigdrol and I were tsendrön. They asked us to head the more common entourage and stay behind [in Kalimpong]. Along with the Dalai Lama, only the necessary retinue went since it was said that the Indians had to look after us, and it would be a shame to have so many. So we were told to stay behind and arrange whichever houses [Tib. kuti] we wanted [this would be in Kalimpong], and that we all would meet when the Dalai Lama went for pilgrimage. There were also many Namgyal monks [with us]. The wealthier kudrak had two servants and our kind had one. When we were at Yadong, the Dalai Lama went ahead. Via Nathula, the Dalai Lama went, and among those to receive him were [his] elder brother [Gyalo Thondup], Shakabpa and a welcome group from the Indian side. At that time, wasn't he there, that king?

**Q:** You mean Sikkim?

**A:** Yes. It is said the Sikkim king [Tashi Namgyal] and them gave a good welcome. The Dalai Lama went to Delhi earlier. We were told to wait at Kalimpong and then to come when the pilgrimage began.

**Q:** How long did you stay at Kalimpong?

**A:** Almost a month, you know. I can't remember the dates.

**Q:** In Kalimpong, from early on there was Kungö Shakabpa, and their [his] group was there, right? Like Jenkhentsisum. Did you hear anything about that, meetings?

**A:** No, nothing.

**Q:** They were probably not there.

**A:** We had just arrived and did not know the people very well. Then at Tashidra [Teesta], the Tibetans [in the Kalimpong area] welcomed the Dalai Lama. It seemed that they made the throne of the Panchen Lama slightly lower and it is said that the Panchen Lama got very angry. We heard about this but we did not witness it.

**Q:** I see . Now, regarding [question not finished]

**A:** Then, they went to the meeting and when the meeting was over, the Tibetans invited the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to Kalimpong for a religious invitation. The Dalai Lama went and after the meeting was over, the Panchen Lama went to Siliguri area and flew back.

**Q:** Along with Ngabö?

**A:** Ngabö went later. Then the Dedön Tshogpa Association [of Jenkhentsisum], it seems, asked the Kashag many things, and Ngabö had also left. We did not know about it. Only later. He flew to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama gave religious teachings and then went to Gangtok. Then at Nathula, there was so much snow that he was stuck there for a month or two.

**Q:** What was the reason why the Panchen Lama and Ngabö went by plane?

**A:** The Panchen Lama was also invited [to Kalimpong]. Maybe he was angry regarding the seating arrangements, since there was a difference in height. However, in Kalimpong there were many Tibetans, and maybe he thought that if he stayed, the Chinese might get suspicious. I don't know. So regarding the two, I can't tell you in detail.

**Q:** Have you heard that there was one group who said that the Dalai Lama should stay and another [who said] that he should return to Tibet? It seems there was some talk at meetings. It seems that it must have been Jenkhentsisum and others who were saying that he should stay.

**A:** Yes, they said unless he stayed, it was very dangerous. And from Tibet, there was a welcoming delegation that included Yuthok, Drunychemmo Ngawang Thöndrub [Tib. ngag dbang don grub], the tsipön may have been Shügüpa [Tib. shud khud pa], and representatives of the monasteries and the people also arrived. But Yuthok stayed in India from that time on and so did Drunychemmo Ngawang Thöndrub. Therefore, even if he [Dalai Lama] did go back, the behavior of the Chinese endangered his safety, right? So regarding these things, since we were lower ranking, I can't tell you the details.

**Q:** Why did Yuthok stay? Was he left as a representative?

**A:** I don't know.

**Q:** While in India, there was a lot of talk that the democratic reforms could be postponed as long as one liked, right? Now whether it was in 1950 or whenever, if one becomes part of China, then one day, one has to adopt the socialist system, don't they? Because the country itself was socialist, for this reason, whether it was in '51, '52 or '54, '55, were the Chinese saying that the socialist system was good and that one had to make democratic reforms, whether it was in the Youth League or the villages?

**A:** Oh, of course.

**Q:** How did they do that? Did they send Chinese or Tibetans? Were they doing that at Lhasa, at meetings, how was it [done]?

**A:** They sent a lot of spies. For example, they sent a lot of Baba [khambas from Batang] who were their interpreters. They were Tibetans. The Baba were given Tibetan dress and they came up. After they came to Tibet, and when the Chinese military camps were established, they immediately took off their clothes and began wearing uniforms. And likewise, the Amdos, and even among our kudrak, there were many [pro-Chinese]. For example, something that I myself witnessed. At the treasury in the Potala, then Tsenamgen [Tib. rse nam gan], sometime in '54 to '55, I went as the staff of the Trapchi Legung to store things. Shölkang Jedrung and Janglojen's [Tib. lcang lo can] father were there. We were just sitting around and chatting. The two [of them] really spoke, [saying] that socialism results in great happiness, that after one becomes socialist, there were no worries as to one's livelihood, and great happiness for both the mind and the body. It seems that Stalin was not dead at that time and they said that he would live to be 150 years old, and Chairman Mao would also live for 100 years. This had already been decided by the doctors according to science. So even one's life would get longer. Therefore, it seems that both of them were Chinese propaganda tools. We did not know about this. Now, as we think about it today, these two were propaganda tools. Likewise, there were people from the high rankings, the middle rankings and the lower rankings [Tib. rab 'bring tha gsum]. And even among the monks there were a lot of Chinese monks who had arrived at the three great monasteries.

**Q:** Chinese monks?

**A:** Yes. They were Chinese. It seems they were sent during the time of the Guomindang. It seems they were paid by the Guomindang. We didn't know that, thinking that they were religious practitioners. Later when the Communists and the Guomindang became enemies, these monks were arrested and put in prison by the Communists. It was like that. The Chinese sent an abundance of spies, irrespective of sex or occupation. It seems that they were full of spies and propaganda personnel. For us in Tibet, forget about doing this, it did not even enter our minds. The reason being we were a Buddhist country living by the truth, and we thought, who would ever bully such ones like us? We were acting like that and the Communists, as real bandits, bullied [us]. The Chinese are ones who have to be so suspicious and secretive, and so it was full of spies.

**Q:** Besides spies, there were the Youth League [Tib. gzhon nu tshogs pa] and the Women's Association [Tib. bud med tshogs pa]. Whether there were those who were working in these - were they giving some lectures and things like that?

**A:** Yes, they were! They made them gather and they said how good the communists system was and how the old society was no good. They were doing a lot of propaganda about that. They were also paid a handsome salary. Poor fellows, they were also well practiced. They had done all of that in China, and so when they were in Tibet, they never had to worry since they were so used to it. They were used to it. How to suppress, how to be diplomatic, how to win over people by luring them [in], and how to think. That's all their work was about. As for us, we don't think for just this life, but we say our prayers even for the next life and we stay leisurely [Tib. dal po] [laughter]. They don't have anything to do but that.

**Q:** For example, whether in Lhasa, nearby or the villages, what did they do? Did they send the Youth League members or [not finished]?

**A:** Oh, they sent the youth and to the poor they said that they would help and that it was the feudal society that made them poor. "So we are going to raise you up. We are your vanguard [Tib. gdong len]." They said that the Communist Party was the vanguard of the workers and the peasants. And the people were not to blame. They didn't understand politics and they would be happy if they were given some dayan, right? And they would say things, right? And whether it was the nomads or the agriculturists, if their livelihood become a bit better, then they [Chinese] would think that it was not so good, right? They [Chinese] don't have any religious faith at all. Chairman Mao himself said that religion is opium. You can read that in the Dalai Lama's biography. And that is the truth too. That is their outlook. They said that religion serves to fool the people, and even Lord Buddha was slandered a lot. They said that Buddha used religion to serve himself ruling his country, and it is not religion at all. They acted that out in the drama performance and did all of this.

**Q:** In Lhasa, were they saying anything about religion?

**A:** What?

**Q:** That practicing religion is not good. That it is a waste of butter. Were they saying that?

**A:** Sure. It was not done out in the open, however, they were saying [things] just [like] that. Like saying, "What's the use of butter lamps?" They don't know the meaning of religion. They don't have the religious outlook. If they knew religion, then, it was a

question of not enough butter offered, of offering too little. Since their outlook was that of the barbarian [Tib. kla klo], their talk was also barbarian. They said that religion was bad and criticized the monks. [They] even said something to the effect that lamas are yellow wolves, and they talked about the wolves and jackals.

**Q:** Do you remember any of the political songs of the '50-59 period?

**A:** That I don't know. The Chinese used to sing songs like, "Tibet is our homeland, our happy home, and where we can eat pork and lamb. Ha, Ha, Ha [Tib. bod ljongs nga tsho'i pha yul red/ nga tsho'i skyid pa'i pha yul red/ phag sha lug sha za rgyu 'dug/ Ha, Ha, Ha]."

**Q:** They did?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Did the Chinese sing this or the Tibetans?

**A:** The Chinese.

**Q:** How is it again? Did they sing that Tibet is their homeland?

**A:** Yes, [repeats the words again]. So Tibet was their homeland and [they] had been very happy . Otherwise, the Communists were too strict and one could not freely sing songs like the earlier times. Earlier there were singers.

**Q:** I was looking for some but only found one or two. Earlier there were so many political songs.

**A:** Earlier, politically, even during the Chinese war during the 13th's time, it is said that a lot of songs were sung. And regarding Tsarong [Wangchuk Gyalpo], it's said, "Saying in the morning that he is a yellow bird, he comes to the top of the Jokhang. In the evening, he says he's a turquoise bird and goes to Yamon." Which means that at night he went to the Chinese wearing a blue satin chupa and in the morning he went to the top of the Jokhang where the Kashag was held wearing the official yellow satin uniform [Tib. snga dro ser bya yin zer, bla brang thog la phebs kyis, dgong mo g.yu bya yin zer, ya mon nang la phebs kyis].

**Q:** I see.

**A:** So there were songs like that. When the Dalai Lama came to India, I think, the Chinese Lujun War came up [happened], and the Dalai Lama could not stay at Lhasa and came to India. During that time, the Panchen Lama was taken down [to Lhasa] by the Chinese, and the Ambans must have dined him or something. There was some song about [that] saying, "If the day hadn't broken, there was a sign of the theft [Tib. nam langs pa ma gtogs/ rkun ma'i g.ya' cig 'dug ga]." Anyway, this implies that since the Dalai Lama went to India, it was said that the Panchen Lama had to be the substitute. He may have even stayed at Lhasa and participated in some ceremonies. May have, but I can't tell you properly. Now, this you will probably find in Shakabpa's book.

**Q:** There was some talk in India with Zhou Enlai and it was said that the democratic reforms could be postponed, and that they were going to withdraw many of their cadres, right?

**A:** They said that the cadres who had made mistakes, they were going to advise them. There wasn't any talk about withdrawing them, mind you. It was said that, "The cadres have made a lot of mistakes. We are going to advise them, so it is better to return soon." Anyway, since the Dedön Tshogpa Association was there, they would be suspicious, right?

**Q:** During this time, since the Dalai Lama was in India, was there some commotion taking place in Tibet?

**A:** I don't think so. There wasn't any talk that this took place.

**Q:** So the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, and whether it is regarding the various offices, or the Chinese policy, did things improve?

**A:** When the Dalai Lama returned, the postponement of the reforms for 6 years was announced. Then there was something to the effect that it depended on whether the miser would agree or not, or that it could be postponed for 15 years. Then the Tibet Autonomous Region was curtailed. The number of cadres was reduced.

**Q:** They did reduce [the number]?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Are you saying that the number of Chinese were reduced?

**A:** No, Tibetans. When the Tibet Autonomous Region was started, there were a few Chinese. In each office there were generally 2-3 Chinese. Most were government officials. Then there were some others also. When the Tibet Autonomous Region first began, I was working in the Translation and Editing Section [Ch. bian yi ke]. In that there was [a person from] Tashilhunpo, a person by the name of Rinchen who was a letsenpa. Then there was a Chinese by the name of Kumbela who spoke Tibetan well. I was a tsendrön and at that time, the one who had the power to appoint tsidrun to work in the Tibet Autonomous Region was in the hands of Lhautara Drunyichemmo. The lay officials were appointed by the gadrung - what was his name? He's from Chongye [Tib. 'phyongs rgyas]. See, it's like this. My mind is not good. His name is Dumra [Tib. ldum ra]. They had to submit the plans to the Dalai Lama. So I went to the drunyichemmo and said, "Please, I just cannot be of service at the Tibet Autonomous Region. I have served the local government for my life and even here I am not of much service. This Tibet Autonomous Region, I just cannot be of any service, so please don't put me on the list." I went to see him twice. Just now, Tenzin Gyentsen [Tib. bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan] [Lhautara Tsendrön] is here, and he probably knows. He sort of implied that it was alright and not alright. Anyway, he did not give me leave. So I had to go. And when they curtailed the staff, I was one among them.

**Q:** What was the reason for the curtailing?

**A:** They said that they had curtailed because the reforms were postponed for 6 years and the Tibet Autonomous Region was too big. So they didn't want to do it extensively.

**Q:** After, you returned [question not finished]

**A:** Is it time now?

**Q:** It's 2 o'clock. Let me ask you this. If one were to consider from 1951 to '56-'57, then, what was the Chinese policy? At first they were very diplomatic, and at what period were they saying that they were going to do democratic reforms and speak about socialism? When they first came, a lot of soldiers came in 1951, right? During this time, were they being very diplomatic? [Saying] things like, they had come to help and that they were going to return.

**A:** Yes, they said that once development in Tibet took place, then they would return. This they did indeed say. Even the Dalai Lama during a religious teaching told the public that the Chinese were going to return. The reason he said that was that he related what the Chinese said and it was not a situation where the Dalai Lama was just guessing. What they had guaranteed, the Dalai Lama was making it clear. The Tibetan people were very suspicious, and so the Dalai Lama himself laid that to rest.

**Q:** As I look at it, in 1955-'56 the revolt in Kham took place, right?

**A:** Yes, a bit.

**Q:** Yes, and many of them were coming to Lhasa, right?

**A:** Then in '55-'56, it was starting a little bit. The Chinese were saying that they were bandits. [laughter] They [Chinese] came into other people's land. They did the banditry and said that the people were bandits. When we were returning [from China] and when we got to Triu Drango [Tib. tre hor brag 'go], they said that there were bandits and that we had to be careful. At that time, there was no problem in Kham. We only knew when we got to Drango. I can't tell you clearly what happened to Ba Litang and Chantreng [Tib. cha phreng]. Then, in these areas which were out of the way, the people there requested the Dalai Lama to come. But he could not, and in these areas and in the Markham areas, Trijang Lama went. Then near the main roads, Karmapa went to the various Kagyü [Tib. bka' rgyud] branch monasteries, and to the Nyingma branch monasteries, Jung Lama went. When the Dalai Lama was at Chengdu, there was a great earthquake and the Dalai Lama had to stay for a month or two. The others had already left. The earthquake lasted for a very long time. Rocks had fallen on the road and the Dalai Lama could not go.

Later when things subsided, there were still some tremors and stones were falling. On the way down, the party stayed at the monasteries at Dartsedo, but on the way up, the monasteries were damaged and the Dalai Lama had to stay in a tent.

**Q:** After the Khambas came up, did the situation deteriorate or did the Chinese become more and more defiant after the roads were built? Now, if we look from 1951-'57, at first the Chinese were being very diplomatic. How long did it last? Until about '54 or [question not finished]

**A:** Oh, this was until 1959. They did it non-stop, and the Khambas also did the same.

**Q:** No, no- [question not finished]

**A:** Down there they could not stay since the Chinese were suppressing them. Then they came up and in 1959, Chushigandru, the Army for the Defense of Religion [Tib. tensung magari], was formed. They were there when the Dalai Lama was brought to India.

**Q:** What I was thinking was that at first, the Chinese were being very diplomatic, and it's even said that they didn't even retaliate if one slapped them on the cheek. Did this policy change after they had completed the roads, or was it only after the Khamba revolt?

**A:** The Khambas were carrying on with guerrilla warfare, so the Chinese were destroying them as much as possible, and a large number of Khambas must have been killed. And they [Khambas] were doing the same. Since they could not hold onto the land, they came up. It was that way until 1959. It did not cease.

**Q:** After the return from India, in Lhasa, the preparations of the Chinese in terms of having guns on rooftops, cannons, was this there from earlier on or were they getting more militant around 1957-'58?

**A:** How?

**Q:** Some say that on top of houses, the Chinese had guns and that they were fully ready. In nineteen fifty [not finished]

**A:** Oh, that was always there. For example, in 1959, when the Dalai Lama was taking his Geshe exam, Sambo House was sold to the Chinese, right? If the Sungjō rawa [the place for the religious teaching where the Dalai Lama was taking the exam] is here, then Sambo House is here. So they face each other. And on top of that, they had built bunkers and it was full of Chinese soldiers. The Sambo House was sold. Our kudrak sold their houses early on and this was detrimental to security, as if it was for the Chinese to build the bunkers. Next to that, there were some houses and the Chinese were there on full alert. In 1956-'58, they were not being too noticeable. However, the bunkers were already in existence. When the Dalai Lama was going and giving teachings, he could not even give the teachings. The guns totally surrounded [the area].

**Q:** Now, the policy of the Chinese [question not finished]

**A:** Anyway, when the houses were sold and people who stayed there were all soldiers. And the soldiers' only work was fighting,

right? They would do their work when the order was given, right?

**Q:** In 1956, '57 and '58, for example, during the Mönlam there were some leaflets thrown, and it seems there was some commotion. Likewise, in Lhasa, were the Tibetans and the Chinese not getting along, resulting in any skirmishes?

**A:** There may have been some smaller incidents [answer not finished]

**Q:** It is said that at the Kuru Samba bridge [Tib. ku ru zam pa], something happened?

**A:** The Kuru Bridge was over the Lhasa Kyichu [Tib. skyid chu] River. Kuru means that a cross [X] was made on the mouth. Who was this made against? It was made against Shengkawa or Shasur [same family 2 names]. In the past, the coracle crossing was looked after by Shasur and he got the ride fares. The income from this may have been large. So it is said that the Chinese put a cross on Shasur's mouth by making a bridge. Later, they put [built] a larger bridge. During this time, the new Norbulinga palace was built.

**Q:** When was this? After the Dalai Lama returned from China?

**A:** It was completed when he went to China. So it was in 1953 or '52. During this time, a stableman of the Dalai Lama's stable [Tib. chibs g.yog] went to get some slate. I don't know whether they were saying that he was not going properly on the bridge or what, I don't know. Anyway, he was killed on the bridge. At that time, there wasn't any commotion [Tib. zing cha]. Of course people would complain, saying that the Chinese had killed even a stable boy. If they shot the Dalai Lama's servant, then as far as the common people were concerned, there was no need to even consider them, right? They did complain, but I don't remember any commotion coming out of this.

**Q:** What year was this?

**A:** It must have been around '52-53

**Q:** According to their policy, there were many things to change in Tibet, right? They were saying that one had to change to socialism and do democratic reforms, right? When they did that, on the one hand, it was very difficult to do so, right? When they said that the democratic reforms had to be done, people in the countryside were probably not listening too much. Now, if you were to just think about this, the Tibetans were not listening, and so finally, did the Chinese need a militant revolt? Because if there was chaos, then they could implement changes?

**A:** Yes. That they had already calculated. They profited if they did things militantly, but we didn't have militant [power] to do [things] against them. They had everything ready and if they could do things militantly, then they could arrest those who disagreed with them, and they had ideas to then do democratic reforms right away.

**Q:** Therefore, if you just think about it, then you think that the Chinese needed that [revolt].

**A:** Oh, of course! Even in China they were well practiced in that. Anyway, if one has power, then one can do and say whatever one likes. However, when one looks at it on the surface, the democratic reforms were as if they were left up to the people. This they speak of abroad. But the people had no thoughts about democratic reforms. They didn't understand politics. They were instigated and they gave the people loans, and later some grain was even brought from Siling. And they told the people to come and get loans, and that they were going to give loans in cash. The countryside people said that if they went to get Chinese loans, then it would be very bad in the future. At first, there was no one who went to get the loans. They said that this would later cause problems, so they were very afraid.

**Q:** So [this is all for today].